

Appl. No. 10/666,543  
Amdt dated: February 28, 2005  
Reply to Office Action of September 28, 2004

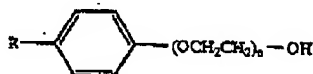
#### Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

#### Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (currently amended) A method of producing an organic compound in a solvent minimized environment which comprises bringing at least one organic reactant comprising one or more amino groups into contact with at least one inorganic metal reagent and in the presence of a catalytic amount of an oxyethylene ether for a time sufficient for the oxyethylene ether to at least partially complex the metal of the at least one inorganic or organic metal reagent.

Claim 2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the oxyethylene ether is a polyethylene glycol or an aryl polyoxyethylene ether of the formula:



wherein R is an aryl, alkyl or aralkyl group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms and n has an average integer value between from about 9 to about 150.

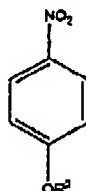
Claim 3. (currently amended) The method of claim 2, wherein n has an average integer value between from about 9 to about 70.

Claim 4. (currently amended) The method of claim 3, wherein n has an average integer value between from about 16 to about 40.

Claim 5. (currently amended) The method of claim 2, wherein n is 9 to or 10.

Claim 6. (original) The method of claim 4, wherein n is 40.

Claim 7. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one organic reactant is a compound of the formula:



wherein R<sub>2</sub> is --H or a C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkyl group and the at least one inorganic metal reagent is an alkali metal thioacetate.

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Claim 8. (currently amended) The method of claim 7, wherein n is approximately 9.

Claim 9. (original) The method of claim 2, wherein the at least one organic reactant is a C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>20</sub> nitro-alkane, optionally substituted with at an aromatic ring, and a C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>20</sub> alkyl or aromatic aldehyde and the at least one inorganic metal reagent is selected from an alkali or alkaline earth hydroxide or a tetraalkyl ammonium hydroxide.

Claim 10. (original) The method of claim 9, wherein the C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>20</sub> nitroalkane is 1-nitropropane and the aldehyde is propionaldehyde.

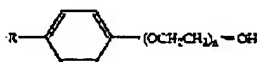
Claim 11. (original) The method of claim 10, wherein the alkali hydroxide or tetraalkyl ammonium hydroxide is selected from sodium hydroxide, cesium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, lithium hydroxide or tetrabutyl ammonium hydroxide.

Claim 12. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein the at least one inorganic metal reactant is selected from potassium hydroxide or cesium hydroxide.

Claim 13. (currently amended) The method of claim 9, wherein n is approximately 9.

Claim 14. (original) A method of producing a nitroalcohol in a solvent minimized environment which comprises contacting a C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>20</sub> nitroalkane, optionally substituted with an aromatic group, and a C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>20</sub> aliphatic or aromatic aldehyde, in the presence of a catalytic amount of a catalyst system comprising (i.) an oxyethylene ether; and (ii.) at least one hydroxide for a time sufficient to form the nitroalcohol.

Claim 15. (currently amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the oxyethylene ether is a polyethylene glycol or an aryl polyoxyethylene ether of the formula:



wherein R is an aryl, alkyl or aralkyl group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms and n has an average integer value between from about 9 to about 150.

Claim 16. (original) The method of claim 14, wherein the C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>20</sub> nitroalkane is 1-nitropropane.

Claim 17. (original) The method of claim 14, wherein the C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>20</sub> aldehyde is propionaldehyde.

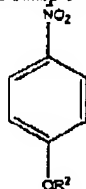
Claim 18. (original) The method of claim 14, wherein the hydroxide is sodium hydroxide, cesium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, lithium hydroxide or tetraalkyl ammonium hydroxide or a tetraalkylammonium hydroxide potassium hydroxide.

Claim 19. (currently amended) The method of claim 18, wherein n is approximately 9 to

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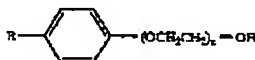
or i0.

Claim 20. (original) A method of producing N-acetyl-p-aminophenol in a solvent minimized environment, which comprises contacting a compound of the formula:



wherein R<sub>2</sub> is --H or a C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkyl group with a catalytic amount of a catalyst system comprising (i.) an oxyethylene ether; and (ii.) alkali metal thioacetate for a time sufficient to form N-acetyl-p-aminophenol.

Claim 21. (currently amended) The method of claim 20, wherein the oxyethylene ether is a polyethylene glycol or an aryl polyoxyethylene ether of the formula:



wherein R is an aryl, alkyl or aralkyl group having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms and n has an average integer value between from about 9 to about 150.

Claim 22. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein the R<sub>2</sub> is --H.

Claim 23. (original) The method of claim 22, wherein the equivalent weight ratio of the compound of formula (II):alkali metal thioacetate is approximately 1:1.

Claim 24. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein R<sub>2</sub> is a C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>4</sub> alkyl group.

Claim 25. (original) The method of claim 24, wherein the equivalent weight ratio of the compound of formula (II):alkali metal thioacetate is approximately 1:3.

Claim 26. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein the alkali thioacetate is potassium thioacetate.

Claim 27. (currently amended) The method of claim 15, wherein n is ~~about 40 to~~ or 41.